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Minister of Finance Appoints Panel to Help Children with Severe Disabilities

Related documents:

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- Backgrounder

The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance, announced today the appointment of an expert panel to examine ways to help parents save for the long-term financial security of a child with a severe disability. Plans to establish the panel were announced in Budget 2006.

"An important consideration for parents of a child with a severe disability is how best to ensure the financial security of their child when they are no longer able to provide support," Minister Flaherty said.

The panel will examine a range of potential savings vehicles, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and recommend the most appropriate measures. Panel members will receive a salary of $1 for their work. The terms of reference for the panel are provided in the attached backgrounder.

Mr. James Barton Love, Q.C., will serve as Chair of the group. Mr. Love is a partner in the Toronto law firm Love & Whalen and is Chairman and CEO of Legacy Private Trust. Also joining the committee are Mr. Laurie Beachell, National Coordinator for the Council of Canadians with Disabilities, and Mr. Rémy Girard, the well-known actor who is also a spokesperson for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation and the Federation of Family and Friends of People Affected by Mental Illness. Biographical information about the members is attached.

Consistent with the six-month timeframe indicated in Budget 2006, the group has been asked to report its recommendations to the Minister by Nov. 9, 2006.

Persons wishing to submit their views to the panel can do so before October 15, 2006, by writing to the Expert Panel on Disability Savings care of (c.o.) the Tax Policy Branch, Department of Finance, 140 O'Connor Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5 or by writing to the panel's e-mail address at disabilitysavings-epargne-handicapes@fin.gc.ca.

For further information, media may contact:

Eric Richer
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613-996-7861

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Biographical Information

James Barton Love, Q.C., chair:

Mr. Love is a lawyer and founding partner of the Toronto law firm Love & Whalen. He is also Chairman and CEO of Legacy Private Trust, which specializes in wills, estates, trusts and guardianships and focuses its service mandate on being a fiduciary. He has practised in the areas of tax, acquisitions, mergers, corporate reorganizations, estate planning, wills and trusts. Mr. Love obtained a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Laws in Taxation Law from Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto, Ontario. He was appointed Queen's Counsel by Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada in 1992.

Laurie Beachell, member:

Mr. Beachell is National Coordinator, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, a national advocacy association of persons with disabilities. Mr. Beachell has over 20 years of experience with voluntary boards in social policy development and advocacy. He was a member of the Technical Advisory Committee on Tax Measures for Persons with Disabilities, which was established in 2003 and tabled an extensive report to the Ministers of Finance and National Revenue in December 2004.

Rémy Girard, member:

Mr. Girard is a well-known actor who is best known for his roles in the films *The Decline of the American Empire*, *Jesus of Montreal* and *The Barbarian Invasions*. He has received numerous awards for his film and television roles. Mr. Girard is also a spokesperson for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation and the Federation of Family and Friends of People Affected by Mental Illness.

Expert panel to examine ways to help parents save for the long-term financial security of a child with a severe disability

Terms of Reference

The panel will advise the Minister of Finance on ways to help parents save for the long-term financial security of a child with a severe disability. The panel will examine a range of potential vehicles, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and recommend appropriate instruments that could be implemented. The panel will examine:

- Existing ways for parents to save for a financially dependent child with a severe disability, and their adequacy.
- Potential new savings vehicles including a tax-deferred and tax pre-paid savings plan.

The panel will consider the following issues in assessing the relative advantages and disadvantages of potential vehicles, and in developing its recommendations:

- The relative effectiveness of proposed measures in promoting savings, rather than unintended uses such as income-splitting.
- Appropriate eligibility requirements to ensure that any new vehicle is targeted to financially dependent children with a severe disability.
- Other rules/parameters (e.g., limits, treatment of withdrawals/income for federal income and tax purposes, treatment on death);
- Potential implications of new vehicles on an adult child's eligibility for provincial disability benefits;
- How potential instruments could be integrated with other more general measures aimed at improving the tax treatment of savings;
- Administrative feasibility; and
- Potential take-up, government revenue costs.

The panel will provide their findings and recommendations in a letter to the Minister of Finance.

The panel will be allocated a specific budget and will be required to operate within that budget allotment.

Last Updated: 2006-12-06 Important Notices